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## THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF SACRED LITERATURE.

**Suggestions to Examiners.**—During the past year many special examiners, by organizing preparatory classes, succeeded in forming examination groups where otherwise it would have been impossible. We, therefore, take this opportunity to urge upon those who intend to attempt the formation of groups this year the immediate organization of classes for preparatory study.

We do not by any means wish it understood that the ordinary Sunday-school helps will not afford sufficient preparation to enable one to *pass the examination*. A much higher grade of the work may, however, be accomplished after special preparation with this end in view.

The special Direction Sheet which will be supplied to every examinee, and which contains outlines of the subject under consideration, helpful suggestions for work and names of valuable reference books, will tend to make the preparation of the examinees more uniform. No amount of help furnished in this way, however, can take the place of the assistance which may be gained from a class meeting regularly under a leader who is interested in it and its work.

As a large proportion of our examiners are ministers, the pastor's Bible-class is the natural outgrowth of this suggestion. The value of a pastor's class cannot be overestimated in its power to bring the pastor nearer to his people as a teacher, to form a connecting link between the Sunday-school and the church, and to afford opportunity for a more personal religious instruction than can be given from the pulpit.

There comes, however, the objection that many of these busy ministers have neither time nor strength to take the added responsibility of a weekly class. But is there not in nearly every congregation some person who could conduct such a class, and who would be glad to avail himself of the opportunity to do so under the direction of the examiner? Such efficient helps can be obtained by a leader, and such facilities for thorough work be afforded him by the Institute departments that his work need not be too difficult or too trying.

In communities where no suitable leader can be found, the group may enroll as an Institute Bible Club and, choosing one of its own members as a leader, receive through him or her instruction from the Institute.

While we do not wish in any way to depreciate the value of individual preparation, and we affirm that nothing can take its place, yet the end to be gained by this banding together of examinees is threefold, viz., the enthusiasm which naturally arises from working in the same line with others, the direction of a leader who is himself competent to instruct or at least to convey the instruction of the Institute to his class, the confidence to be gained only by thorough preparation.

Let our examiners see to it that so far as possible their groups be formed at once and placed under their own or other competent leadership.

**Suggestions to Bible Clubs.**—A small section of the STUDENT will in future be devoted to the interests of Bible Clubs. It will embody such suggestions to club leaders and club students as seem, by the various reports from the clubs, to be for the general good of all. As the first of these suggestions, the gradual formation of a club library seems practicable and advisable. In view of the

fact that most public and private non-professional libraries are but scantily supplied with the best books of reference upon religious topics, either historical or doctrinal, but few clubs have unlimited access to a library which is of value to them.

Only such books as seem to us necessary are placed upon the "required" list of the various club courses. There are many others which would be both helpful in the present and valuable for future work. Would it not be possible for each club to set aside a small sum, very small if need be, each month toward the purchase of reference books to be used freely by all members of the club.

In a class of ten a contribution of 10 cents per month would supply several books through the year, and a club of twenty could form a miniature library from this sum. This library should contain not only books bearing directly upon the course in hand, but the standard works upon the history of the Christian Church, a convenient commentary, and the occasional periodicals which contain articles of special interest to Bible students.

In the hope that some of our clubs may adopt this suggestion, such books and other materials as are fresh and valuable will be from time to time named on this page.

The first thing that every club should seek to provide for itself is a good wall map. The best and cheapest are those published by the Oxford Map Co., Oxford, Ohio. The map on Palestine in the Time of Christ costs about \$1.50. One of Palestine in the time of Samuel would cost about the same. One of the leading "Lives of the Christ," of which there are several, each one being good in its way, is the next indispensable work. The latest, and in some respects the most useful, is the abridgment of Edersheim's large work on Jesus the Messiah, at \$2.00. The unabridged edition costs \$6.00. Geikie's *Life of Christ* can be purchased in a very cheap edition for about 60 cents; with good paper, print, and binding for about \$2.50. Geikie is valuable because of the detailed and careful characterization of the events, showing them in their proper setting, and because of the careful analysis of all the sayings of Christ. He does not indulge in rhetoric or poetry, but makes everything very clear and simple. Farrar's *Life of Christ* is very different. It abounds in striking characterization and brilliant passages. All that the imagination can supply in the life of Christ will be found in this work. A very good edition can be purchased for about \$3.00. For a brief summarized *Life of Christ* which can be read in a few hours, an admirable book for review, one may buy Stalker's *Life of Christ*, costing 60 cents.